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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0260
RUEHPNH/NVC PORTSMOUTH NH
INFO ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0020
RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MUSCAT 000235

SIPDIS
DEPT ALSO PASS TO KCC; POSTS FOR FRAUD PREVENTION MANAGERS
ATHENS FOR DHS/ICE AND DHS/CIS; ROME FOR DHS/ICE
DHS/CIS
AND
DHS/CBP; NEA/ELA FOR D. MCNICHOLAS; CA/FPP FOR S. SEXTON; CAIRO FOR RCO CROWAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFRD](#) [CVIS](#) [CPAS](#) [CMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: FRAUD SUMMARY - MUSCAT, SEPTEMBER 2008-FEBRUARY 2009

REF: STATE 74840

1A. (U) COUNTRY CONDITIONS: The Government of Oman estimated its population at 2,340,815 in its 2003 census, but the current number is likely to be significantly higher due to an influx of expatriate workers in numerous sectors of the economy. The CIA World Factbook estimates Oman's population to be 3,311,640 in its latest on-line update (March 5, 2009).

Oman's long history of trading between the east coast of Africa and the Indian subcontinent has produced considerable ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity in the population, although a majority of Omani citizens are ethnically Arab. Arabic is the official and most widely spoken language. English, Hindi, Urdu, Swahili, Baluchi, Loti, Telugu, Malayalam, and local dialects are also used. Many government officials and most merchants dealing with the expatriate community speak English.

Like other countries in the region, Oman relies on imported labor to support and carry out its development plans. With ambitious public works, tourism and industrial projects begun throughout the Sultanate, the last two years have seen a rapid increase in the number of expatriates working in the Sultanate. In March 2008, according to Omani Central bank figures, the expatriate workforce was approximately 680,100, up from 511,000 in 2006. While a substantial increase, indications from several sources suggest the official number of expatriate workers in the Sultanate is understated. Americans hold a handful of positions in the private sector, mostly in the oil, education and banking sectors, but technical advisers and managers are mostly from Europe and the Indian subcontinent. Although the majority of third country nationals come to Oman to work, some transit illegally to other countries.

The majority of third country national (TCN) NIV applicants are from Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Syria.

Post's IV applicant pool is small, but similarly diverse. Post's IV processing has decreased considerably since FY 2007 when processing for nurses slowed due to a rollback in eligibility dates. Prior to that, IVs for nurses accounted for 90% of Post's IV workload. Presently, the bulk of IV processing is family-based petitions and diversity visa applicants.

1B. (U) NIV FRAUD: Post processed approximately 2,064 non-immigrant visas from September 2008 to February 2009. Fifty percent of these were B1/B2 applications from Omanis and Indians traveling to the U.S. for business and training sponsored by employers in Oman. Post did not encounter any fraud with these and other NIV categories processed during the reporting period.

1C. (U) IV FRAUD: Post received 31 IV petitions and applications

during the reporting period. Most were in the immediate relative and family-based categories. Only one case of potential fraud is currently under investigation. Post uncovered information indicating that a Filipino IV applicant who has an F2B petition pending may have been hiding a previous marriage.

¶D. (U) DV FRAUD: From September 2008 to February 2009, a total of 15 DVs were processed and issued. Post reports no fraud during this period.

¶E. (U) ACS AND US PASSPORT FRAUD: The American Citizen Services unit did not encounter any incidents of ACS fraud.

¶F. (U) ADOPTION FRAUD: None. Post received no adoption applications during this period. Only Muslims are permitted to adopt in Oman.

¶G. (U) USE OF DNA TESTING: Post did not recommend any cases for DNA testing during this period.

¶H. (U) ASYLUM AND OTHER DHS BENEFIT FRAUD: Post did not process any cases during this period.

¶I. (U) ALIEN SMUGGLING, TRAFFICKING, ORGANIZED CRIME, TERRORIST TRAVEL: No cases were reported for the period.

¶J. (U) DS CRIMINAL FRAUD INVESTIGATION: No cases were investigated during this period.

¶K. (U) HOST COUNTRY PASSPORT IDENTITY DOCUMENTS, AND CIVIL REGISTRY:

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Oman maintains a national identity card for both Omani citizens and expatriates. Post is not aware of any fraud related to host country passport identity documents or any civil registry fraud.

¶L. (U) COOPERATION WITH HOST GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES: As post has not experienced any fraud this quarter, Post has not raised any fraud concerns with the Omani government. The embassy has excellent relations with the Royal Oman Police (ROP) and the consular section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The ROP and MFA communicate with the embassy whenever they encounter fraud that impacts the embassy's operations.

¶M. (U) AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN: None.

¶N. (U) STAFFING AND TRAINING: The Fraud Prevention Manager is Vice Consul Stephen F. Ibelli. The FPM attended the fraud course at FSI in July of 2008. The senior FSN, Peter Menezes, received fraud training in 2003. Post plans a fraud briefing led by the British Embassy in Oman's Regional Risk Assessment Manager for the end of March. The briefing will cover such topics as common forgery methods, bank statements, educational certificates and signature verification. Local American consular staff will participate in it, as well as a number of EU consular colleagues.
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